

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MILAN 01244 171323Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL MILAN
TO AMEMBASSY ROME
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TAGS: PDIP PINT IT KS PINR
SUBJECT: SOUTH KOREA OPENS CONSULATE GENERAL IN MILAN

1. SUMMARY. SOUTH KOREA HAS OPENED CONSULATE GENERAL IN MILAN WITH A CONSULAR DISTRICT THAT WILL INCLUDE ITALY'S EIGHT MOST NORTHERN REGIONS. CONSULATE, TO BE INVOLVED PRIMARILY IN TRADE PROMOTION AND OTHER COMMERCIAL WORK, IS TO BE STAFFED BY THREE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICERS. END SUMMARY.

2. SOUTH KOREA HAS RECENTLY OPENED A NEW CONSULATE GENERAL AT VIA CAMPERIO 1 IN MILAN. CONSULATE WILL HAVE JURISDICTION OVER ITALY'S EIGHT MOST NORTHERN REGIONS AND WILL BE STAFFED BY THREE OFFICERS INCLUDING RECENTLY ARRIVED CONSUL GENERAL PYUN CHUNG HYUN. ACCORDING TO PYUN WHO PAID 11 AUGUST COURTESY CALL ON CONGEN, CONSULATE'S ACTIVITIES WILL CENTER ON TRADE PROMOTION AND OTHER COMMERCIAL WORK.

3. PYUN CHUNG HYUN IS A STOCKY 40 YEAR OLD CAREER FOREIGN
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PAGE 02 MILAN 01244 171323Z

MINISTRY OFFICIAL WHO'S PREVIOUS OVERSEAS POST WAS AS MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY IN PARIS. LOQUACIOUS AND FRIENDLY, PYUN SEEMS WELL DISPOSED TOWARDS THE US. HE SPEAKS GOOD IF SOMEWHAT HALTING ENGLISH, FRENCH, BUT NO ITALIAN. HIS WIFE AND TWO TEENAGE SONS ARE HERE WITH HIM.

4. DURING BRIEF DISCUSSION OF US-SOUTH KOREAN

RELATIONS, PYUN STATED THAT CURRENT US TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH KOREA, IF DONE PROPERLY, WAS A GOOD THING FOR BOTH COUNTRIES. HIS GOVERNMENT'S COMPLAINT, PYUN STRESSED, CONCERNED THE RATE OF WITHDRAWAL NOT THE IDEA OF WITHDRAWAL. THAT, PLUS SOUTH KOREA'S CRITICAL NEED FOR ADDITIONAL MODERN US MILITARY HARDWARE TO MAINTAIN A CREDIBLE BALANCE OF FORCES BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA. THE SOVIETS ARE NOT HESITANT TO GIVE THE NORTH KOREANS THE LATEST IN TANKS, ARTILLERY AND PLANES, SAID PYUN, WHILE WE SOUTH KOREANS OFTEN HAVE TO SETTLE FOR LAST YEAR'S MODEL.

5. WHAT ABOUT SOUTH KOREA'S LONG TERM RELATIONS WITH THE NORTH? PYUN CLAIMED ONLY WAY SOUTH KOREA COULD EVER HOPE TO HAVE ANY LEVERAGE WITH NORTH KOREAN LEADERSHIP WAS TO CONTINUE TO PURSUE AGGRESSIVELY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WAIT FOR THE NORTH KOREANS TO REACH A POINT WHERE THEY FELT COMPELLED TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH SOUTH KOREA. ONLY THROUGH ECONOMIC AND MILITARY STRENGTH COULD SOUTH KOREA CREATE THE BASIS FOR SOME SORT OF POLITICAL RECONCILIATION WITH THE NORTH. PYUN CONCEDED THAT UNDER BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES THIS WOULD BE MOST DIFFICULT PROCESS THAT COULD EASILY TAKE 30 YEARS OR MORE.

6. AND NORTH KOREA'S FOREIGN POLICY? PYUN SEES THE NORTH MOVING CLOSER TO THE CHINESE BUT WITHOUT SERIOUSLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MILAN 01244 171323Z

DISRUPTING THE DELICATE BALANCING ACT THEY HAVE HISTORICALLY MAINTAINED BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA.
FINA

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